

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-09 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03

H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 NIC-01 SAJ-01 EB-07 FEA-01 INT-05 OES-03

AGR-05 STR-04 COME-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01 /104 W

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R 040904Z APR 75

FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4169

INFO AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

USLO PEKING

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 3593

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR CH IR

SUBJ: CHINESE VICE PREMIER VISIT TO IRAN

REF: HONG KONG 3082 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: IF AN AFP REPORT FROM PEKING IS ACCURATE, PRC
VICE PREMIER LI HSIEN-NIEN IS DEPARTING PEKING APRIL 4 FOR
AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO IRAN. AS LI'S PRIMARY FUNCTION IN THE
PRC IS ECONOMIC, OIL TECHNOLOGY WILL PROBABLY BE A TOPIC FOR
DISCUSSION, BUT THE PRINCIPAL PURPOSE OF THE VISIT WOULD AP-
PEAR TO BE THE PRC'S INCREASING INTEREST IN SPREADING ITS
INTERNATIONAL INVOLVEMENT. THE TIMING OF THE VISIT JUST AFTER
THE FAILURE OF MIDDLE EAST PEACE NEGOTIATIONS ALSO SUGGESTS
THE PRC'S SPECIFIC INTEREST IN EXPANDED INFLUENCE IN THE REGION.

END SUMMARY

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1. AFP APRIL 3 REPORTED THAT LI HSIEN-NIEN, THE PRC'S THIRD-RANKING VICE PREMIER AND SENIOR ECONOMIC OFFICIAL, WILL DEPART PEKING FOR AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO TEHRAN APRIL 4 IN RETURN FOR THE SEPTEMBER 1972 PEKING VISIT BY EMPRESS FARAH. IF CONFIRMED, THE VISIT IS A FURTHER STRONG INDICATION OF THE PRC'S DESIRE TO EXPAND ITS INTERNATIONAL INVOLVEMENT CURRENTLY, ANOTHER VICE PREMIER, CHEN YUNG-KUEI, IS VISITING MEXICO AND OIL TECHNOLOGY IS ON THE AGENDA THERE. IN ADDITION, TENG HSIAO-PING IS SCHEDULED IN PARIS NEXT MONTH.

2. LI'S PRIMARY ROLE HAS BEEN AN ECONOMIC ONE BUT, SINCE LAST SUMMARY WITH PREMIER CHOU EN-LAI IN HOSPITAL, HE HAS SHARED WITH RANKING VICE PREMIER TENG HSIAO-PING THE HOST RESPONSIBILITIES FOR MOST TOP-LEVEL FOREIGN GUESTS. SINCE THE JANUARY 1975 NATIONAL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS, HOWEVER, LI HAS NOT APPEARED OFTEN IN PUBLIC AND HAS PRESUMABLY BEEN WORKING ON DEVELOPING ECONOMIC PLANING TO PREPARE THE WAY FOR CHINA'S PUBLICLY-ANNOUNCED GOAL OF BECOMING A POWERFUL MODERN SOCIALIST STATE BY THE END OF THE CENTURY. SECOND RANKING VICE PREMIER CHANG CHU-

CHIAO, WHO PRESUMABLY HAS BEEN ENGAGED WITH THE CURRENT DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT CAMPAIGN, IS CURRENTLY UNDERTAKING HIS FIRST HOSTING RESPONSIBILITY WITH THE TUNISIAN PRIME MINISTER, AN INDICATION THAT RESPONSIBILITIES HAVE BEEN SORTED OUT AT THE TOP LEVEL AND THAT CURRENT PROGRAMS ARE NOW IN TRAIN. THUS, WITH CHANG READY TO HELP TENG WITH FORTHCOMING FOREIGN VISITORS, LI IS FREE TO TRAVEL. SINCE HE SERVED AS BACKUP MAN TO PREMIER CHOU FOR THE EMPRESS' VISIT, HE IS ALREADY IDENTIFIED WITH IRAN. HIS VISIT BEARS OUT PREDICTIONS (REFTEL) THAT THE CHINESE LEADERSHIP WILL BE INCREASINGLY MORE ACTIVE INTENTIONALLY AND WILL BE REPLAYING AT LEAST SOME OF THE MANY VISITS TO PEKING BY RANKING FOREIGN DIGNITARIES.

3. THE CHOICE OF IRAN FOR A VISIT AT THIS TIME COINCIDES WITH CHINA'S CONCERN WITH THE MIDDLE EAST IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE FAILURE OF EGYPT-ISRAELI NEGOTIATIONS AND, MORE PARTICULARLY, WITH PRC CONCERN THAT A GENEVA MEETING TO RESOLVE THE MIDDLE EAST SITUATION WILL TREND TO STRENGTHEN SOVIET INFLUENCE WITH THE ARABS. THE PRC HAS BEEN INCREASING-

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LY INTERESTED IN PURSUING ITS OWN INFLUENCE FURTHER WEST BEYOND PAKISTAN TOWARDS THE MIDDLE EAST. THE DECEMBER 1975 VISIT TO PEKING OF AFGHANISTANI PRESIDENT DAUD'S BROTHER WAS A STEP IN THIS DIRECTION AND, PERHAPS IN PREPARATION FOR LI'S TEHRAN VISIT, PRC MEDIA HAVE BEEN GIVING RATHER APPROVING TREATMENT TO THE SHAH'S RECENT AGREEMENT WITH IRAQ. THE CHINESE HAVE SOUGHT TO CULTIVATE THE IRANIANS SINCE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WERE ESTABLISHED

IN AUGUST 1971, PARTICULARLY WITH FONMIN CHI PENG-FEI'S
1973 VISIT AND VICE PREMIER TENG'S STOP IN APRIL 1974 ON HIS
WAY HOME FROM THE UNGA.

4. WHILE THE POLITICAL ASPECTS OF THE VISIT ARE IMPORTANT, THE
LAST RANKING PRC OFFICIAL IN IRAN WAS FOREIGN TRADE MINISTER LI
CHIANG IN EARLY DECEMBER 1974. APPARENTLY, THERE WERE RATHER
MEAGER RESULTS (TEHRAN 10440, 1974). ALTHOUGH LI CHIANG DID
HOLD DISCUSSIONS WITH IRAN OIL OFFICIALS. LI HSIEN -NIEN
PROBABLY HOPES TO CONTINUE THOSE DISCUSSIONS AND TO
FORMALIZE ANY PRELIMINARY ARRANGEMENTS THAT WERE MADE
EARLIER. IN CONSIDERATION ECONOMIC RELATIONS BETWEEN IRAN
AND THE PRC, CHINA'S PRIMARY INTEREST IS PROBABLY WITH OIL
TECHNOLOGY AND THERE HAVE BEEN PAST INDICATIONS OF IRAN'S
WILLINGNESS TO SUPPLY SUCH TECHNOLOGY. HOWEVER, THERE HAS
ALSO BEEN SOME INDICATION THAT IRAN HAS AGREED TO SELL THE
PRC SOME 500,000 MT OF OIL ANNUALLY (TEHRAN 4344). GIVEN
THE WORLD MARKET SITUATION IN TEXTILES, LI MAY WELL ALSO
DISCUSS CHINA'S DECREASING COTTON IMPORT REQUIREMENTS. (COTTON
ACCOUNTED FOR \$23.3 MILLION OUT OF IRAN'S \$26.9 MILLION EX-
PORTS TO THE PRC IN 1973).

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